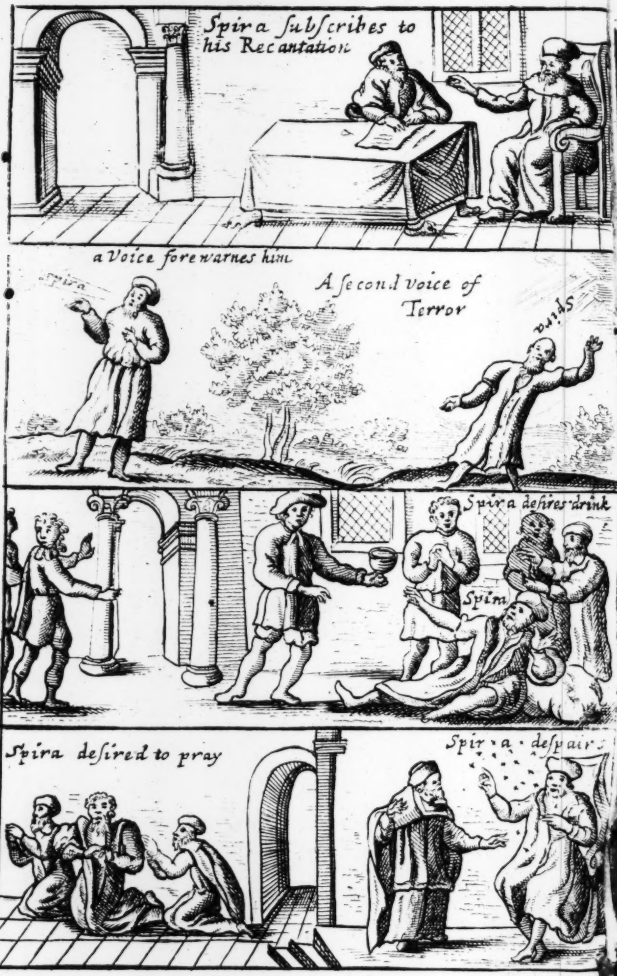
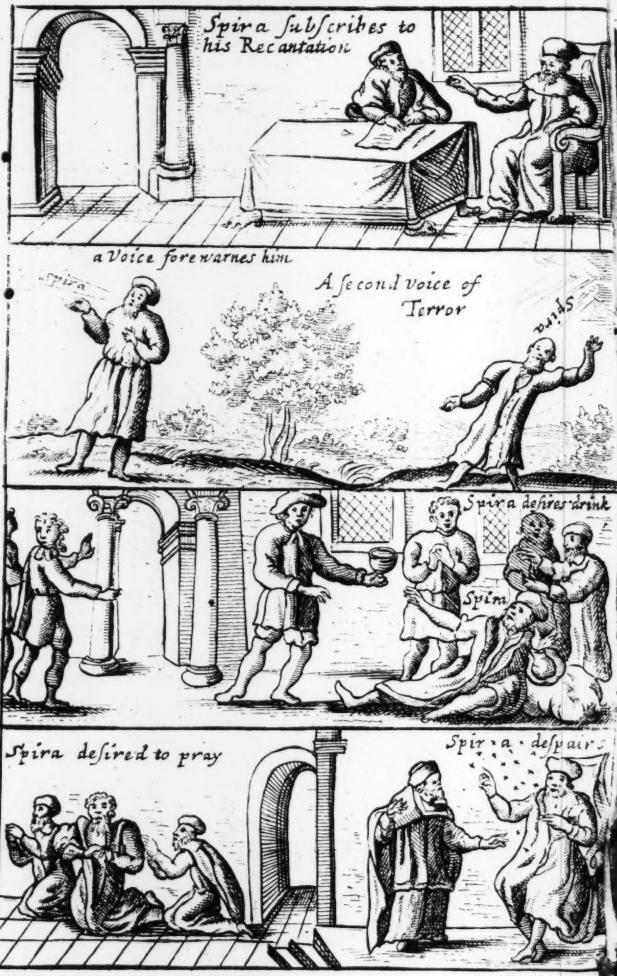


Spira *by* Slavish Fear *doth Truth Deny*
And sets his Trembling Hand *to* Popery
This Iudgment let Apostates *still Admire*
And knowe our God is a Consuming Fire.



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A

RELATION

Of the fearful Eſtate

OF

FRANCIS SPIRA,

In the Year 1548.

Compiled by *Nath. Bacon* Eſq;

Prov. 14. 14.

The Back-ſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own wayes.

LONDON,

Printed for *Edward Thomas*, at the *Adam* and *Eve* in *Little Britain*, 1681.

BOOL
23 APR 1910
OXFORD

The Preface.

FOr truth of this History inſuing, beſides circumſtances of Place, Perſon, Time, Occaſion, ſo exactly obſerved, I refer my ſelf to the Relation of thoſe Godly men, who in ſeveral Languages have manifeſted to the World the ſeveral paſſages thereof: and although I am not ignorant, that at the firſt they were not only not credited, but alſo diſcredited and ſlandered, by ſuch as found them to be a blur to the Roman Profeſſion, yet they loſt

not their luſtre thereby; but being acquitted by many Compurgators of ſeveral Nations, and ſome of the Romiſh *Religion, being all of them ſpectators of this Tragedy, it occaſioned not only a further manifeſtation and confirmation of the Truth, but alſo a large and more frequent confluence, to ſee that which they had formerly only heard of. This partly appeareth out of the ſucceeding Story: But more fully out of an Apology written by* Vergerius, *Biſhop of* Juſtinople, *who was accuſed for diſperſing the Fame of his Example*

ample to the ſtain of Popery, in which Apology to N. Rottan, *Suffragan of* Padua, *is ſhortly and plainly declared, what was ſaid, what was done, and who were preſent. If that it be demanded, what moved me to compile this Treatiſe of* Spira, *tell them, that it ſhould teach Fear and Reverence; and indeed among all thoſe that came to ſee him, few or none return unſhaken.* Vergerius *in his firſt Epiſtle ſaith,* I would fain go ſee him again, but I exceedingly fear and tremble: *and in his Apology ſaith,* It is ſuch a rare

Example as I would willingly go to the fartheſt parts of the World to hear or ſee the like. *The Lady* Jane *to her Fathers Chaplain (that had fallen into* Spira's *ſin) ſaith* Remember the lamentable Eſtate of *Spira. I acknowledg that there hath been formerly a Book publiſhed in Engliſh, on this Subject; but as far as I can learn (for I could not get one of them) it was not ſo various and large as this Treatiſe; aud, as I have heard, a Tranſlation of only one of the Tractates, whence in part I gather'd this Diſcourſe. Concerning*

ing my Care and Fidelity herein, I may truly ſay, without changing of colour, That not one ſentence of all this Work, attributed to the Perſon of Spira, *but it hath its warrant either from the Epiſtles of* Vergerius *and* Gribaldus, *Profeſſors of Law at* Padua; *or from the diſcourſes of* Henry Scringer *a* Scotch *man*, Sigiſm. Gelons *a* Tranſilvanian, *and* Mart. Bocha *a Divine of* Baſil: *I have taken no other liberty than as a Relation, to weave the foreſaid Diſcourſes together, ſo as thoſe who under ſeveral writers were accounted ſeveral, I here*

make one intire Hiſtory, connected by due ſucceſſion of time and occaſion, as punctually as could be aimed at, by the Circumſtances noted in the Writings of thoſe holy and learned men before named.

N. B.

TO

TO THE AUTHOR and READER OF THIS HISTORY.

SOme ſcattered parcels of this Story lay,
in Foreign Papers, which hadſt not found (a way
Thus to collect, had { been obvious prey, / Never ſeen the day.

Reader, wouldſt ſee how ſinning againſt the (light
Will quench and leave the ſoul in a ſad night
Of diſcontent? come hither Reader then, look (here
And learn light-quenching ſins to fear.

Reader, wouldſt ſee the comfort breathing (Spirit
To grieve, what curſleſs grief it doth demerit?
Come hither then, look here,
Here ſee a ſoul that is all Deſpair; a man
All Hell; a Spirit all wound; who can
A wounded ſpirit bear?
Reader wouldſt ſee (what mayſt thou never feel)

Deſpair

Deſpair, Racks, Torments, Whips of burning ſteel;
Come then, look here!
Behold this man, this furnace in whoſe heart
Sin hath created Hells: Oh, in each part
What Flames appear!
His thoughts all ſtings, words, ſwords, brimſtone his breath,
His ſight flames, wiſhes curſes life, a death
A thouſand deaths live in him, he not dead,
A breathing Courſe in living ſcalding lead:
And yet he lives our Monument to tell
How black are quenched lights;
Quencht joys are double frights,
Black days are double nights.
Heaven taſted, loſt, a double Hell.

I have call'd thee, Reader, pray ſo be,
Read this, that others read not thee.
Legas Hiſtoriam,
Ne fias Hiſtoria.

M. N.

Extra-

EXtraordinary Examples of Divine Juſtice, GOD never intended for a nine days Wonder; elſe would he, when he exemplified *Lots* Wife have turned her into a Statue of melting Snow, not of laſting Salt; which ſtood, as *Joſephus* tell us, till his Age, after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and as ſome Travellers report, ſtill at this day, *ut quoddam hominibus præſtaret condimentum, quo ſapiant unde illud caveatur exemplum*: *Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib.* 16. *cap.* 30. for a ſeaſon againſt corruption, a preſervative againſt Apoſtacy. This Tragedy, when freſh and new, was the converſion and confirmation of ſundry Worthies, *Vergerius*, a dayly ſpectator

ſpectator thereof, forſaking a rich Biſhoprick of *Fuſtinopolis*, and tents of Antichriſt, went to *Baſil*, and dyed a worthy Proteſtant: many Nations had Eye Witneſſes of their own Students then in the Univerſity of *Padua*, who penned the Story, the Copies whereof are frequently revived: our Engliſh ones were very defective, and now worn out of ſhops and hands; ſundry Manuſcrips of this abroad, imperfect; which moved me to compare this labour of a worthy Gentleman (who faithfully tranſlated it out of *Italian*, *French* & *Dutch* Letters) with the *Latine* of *Cælius Secundus*, *Curio*, *Mattheus Gribauldus*, profeſſors of the Civil Law in *Padua*: *Sigiſmond Gelons* a *Tranſylvanian*, *Henricus Scotus*, all daily Viſitors of *Spira*, and find it accord with them. Touching *Spira*'s Perſon,

ſon, I find moſt learned Writers do incline to the right and hopeful hand; moved by his ſweet humble, and charitable ſpeeches; ſome few deſperate ones excepted, that fell from him in ſome little agonies, which kept him faſting and watching about ſix months ſpace, eating nothing but what was forc'd down his throat. The ſumm of *Calvins* and *Borrhons* their councel is (who write largely of the uſe of this pattern) that all learn to take heed of backſliding, which Gods ſoul abhors: and not to dally with Conſcience, an Hell on Earth, if juſtly incenſed; more to be feared than the Spaniſh Inquiſition, or all the Strapadoes and Torments in the world; and to take heed of *Spira*'s principal Errors: which were to diſpute with Satan over-buſily in time of weakneſs

neſs, eſpecially to Reaſon, and conclude from preſent Sence to Gods paſt Reprobation and future Damnation: both which is hard, if poſſible, for any man to determine in his own, much more in others caſes: So commending thee to his grace, who is able to eſtabliſh thee to the end, I bid thee farewel, and hope well, while the ſpace of Grace laſteth: *Dum Spiras, ſpera*; ſo maieſt thou take good, and no hurt, by the reading of this terrible Example.

A RELATION Of the Fearful Estate OF *FRANCIS SPIRA.*

IN the Year, 1548. when the glorious Sun of the Gospel was but newly risen in *Europe*, in the days of the Reign of *Edward* the sixth of that Name, King of ENGLAND, in the Territory, and under the Jurisdiction of the City of *Venice*, being the very border of *Italy*, in the Town of *Cittadella*,

la, lived one *Francis Spira*, a Civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great Rank and Eſteem, being of great Experience, of carriage circumſpect and ſevere, his ſpeech grave and compoſed, his countenance ſharp and auſtere, every way befitting that Authority whereunto he was advanced; endow'd with outward bleſſings of Wife and eleven Children, and Wealth in abundance. What his worſt parts were, I have no other warrant than his own Words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitterneſs of a deſperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of paſſion than of ſober confeſſion) may ſeem to add a period to all further commendations.

'I was (ſaith he) exceſſively 'covetous of Money, and ac- 'cordingly applied my ſelf to 'get

'get by Injuſtice, corrupting Ju-
'ſtice by deceit, inventing tricks
'to delude Juſtice; good cauſes
'I either defended deceitfully, or
'ſold them to the adverſary per-
'fidiouſly; ill cauſes I maintain-
'ed with all my might; I wit-
'tingly oppoſed the known
'truth; and the truſt committed
'unto me I either betrayed or
'perverted. Thus having worn out fourty four years, or thereabouts, and the news of the new, or rather, newly revived Opinions of *Luther* coming into thoſe parts, repreſented an object of Novelty unto him; who being as deſirous to know, as he was famous for knowledge, ſuffered not theſe wandring Opinions to paſs unexamined; but ſearching into the Scripture, and into

to all Books of Controverſies that he could get, both old and new, and finding more than fame or opinion, he began to taſt their nature ſo well, as he entertains, loves, and ownes them at length; and with ſuch Zeal, as he became a Profeſſor, yea a Teacher of them, firſt to his Wife, Children, and Family; and after to his Friends, and familiar Acquaintance, and in compariſon, ſeemed to neglect all other Affairs; intending ever to preſs this main point, that *We muſt wholly, and only depend on the free and unchangeable Love of GOD in the death of Chriſt, as the only ſure way to Salvation:* and this was the ſumme of all his Diſcourſe, and this continued for the ſpace of ſix years, or thereabouts, even ſo long as this fire could keep

keep it ſelf within private walls; but at length, it brake forth into publick Meetings, ſo as the whole Province of *Padua* dawned by the the luſtre thereof. The Clergy finding their trade of the Pardons to decay: and their Purgatory to wax cold, began to beſtir themſelves: gloſſing their Actions, firſt, with calumnious aſperſions upon the whole Profeſſion; then more plainly ſtriking at *Spira* with grievous Accuſation.

And to effect their purpoſe ſome promiſe labor, others favor, ſome advice, others maintenance; all joyn to divide either his Soul from his Body, or both from God.

Now was *John Caſa*, the Popes Legate, reſident at *Venice*,

nice, being by Birth a *Florentine*, and one that wanted neither Malice againſt thoſe of this way nor craftineſs to effect his malicious Purpoſes; to him theſe men repair with out-cries againſt *Spira*, that he was the man that condemned the received Rites of the Church, deluded the Eccleſiaſtical Power, and ſcandalized the Policy thereof; one of no mean Rank, being a man of Account and Authority, and thereunto learned in the Scriptures, elegant in ſpeech, and in one word, a dangerous *Lutheran*, having alſo many Diſciples, and therefore not to be deſpiſed.

At this began the *Legate* to caſt his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had happened in *Germany*; where, by the means

means of one only *Luther*, the Romiſh Religion had ſuffered ſuch a blow, as that it could neither be cured by Diſſimulation, nor defended by Power; but the Clergy muſt either mend their manners, or loſe their dignities. On the other ſide, when he ſaw how propenſe the common people inhabiting in the bordering Country of *Italy*, were to entertain thoſe new opinions, now thought it no time to diſpute or perſwade, but with ſpeed repairs to the *Senate*, and procures authority from them to ſend to *Spira*.

Spira by this time had conſidered with himſelf of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore ſubject to be envied by ſuch as neither liked his

his Perſon nor Religion: he perceived that his Opinions were neither retired, nor ſpeculative, but ſuch as aimed at the overthrow of the *Romiſh* Faction, and a change of Policy; and that his enemies wanted neither Power nor Occaſion, to call him to an account in publick, when he muſt either *apoſtatize*, and ſhamefully give his former life, yea his own Conſcience the lie, or endure the utmoſt Malice of his deadly Enemies; or forſake his Wife, Children, Friends, Goods, Authority, yea, his Dear Countrey, and betake himſelf to a Forein People, there to endure a thouſand Miſeries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary Exile.

Being thus diſtracted, and toſſed in the reſtleſs Waves of doubt

doubt, without guide to truſt to, or Heaven to fly to for ſuccour, on the ſuddain, GOD'S Spirit aſſiſting, he felt a calm, and began to diſcourſe with himſelf in this manner.

'Why wandreſt thou thus in 'uncertainties, unhappy man? 'caſt away fear, put on thy 'ſhield, the ſhield of Faith: Where 'is thy wonted courage, thy 'goodneſs, thy conſtancy? re-'member that Chriſt's glory lies 'at the ſtake: ſuffer thou with-'out fear, and he will defend 'thee, he will tell thee what 'thou ſhalt anſwer; he can beat 'down all danger; bring thee out 'of Priſon, raiſe thee from the 'dead: conſider *Peter* in a Dun-'geon, the Martyrs in the Fire; 'if thou mak'ſt a good Confeſſion, 'thou maieſt indeed go to Priſon, 'or death, but an eternal reward

'in Heaven remains for thee;
'What haſt thou in this world
'comparable to Eternall life; to
'Everlaſting happineſs? if thou
'doſt otherwiſe, think of the ſcan-
'dal; (common people live by
'example, thinking whatever is
'done is well done) fear the loſs
'of peace and joy, fear hell, death
'and eternall wrath; or, if the
'fleſh be ſo ſtrong, as to cauſe
'thee to doubt of the iſſue, fly
'thy Country, get thee away
'though never ſo far, rather than
'deny the Lord of Life.

Now was *Spira* in reaſonable quiet, being reſolved to yield to theſe weighty Reaſons. Yet holding it wiſdom to examine all things, he conſults alſo with fleſh and blood: thus the battle doth renew, and the fleſh begins in this manner; 'Be well adviſed, fond
'man, conſider Reaſons on both
ſides

'ſides, and then Judge: how canſt
'thou thus overween thine own
'ſufficiency, as thou neither regar-
'deſt the examples of thy Progeni-
'tors, nor the Judgement of the
'whole Church? doſt thou not
'conſider what miſery this thy
'raſhneſs will bring thee unto?
'thou ſhalt loſe all thy ſubſtance,
'gotten with ſo great Care and
'Travel, thou ſhalt undergo the
'moſt exquiſite torments that
'Malice it ſelf can deviſe, thou
'ſhalt be counted an Heretick of
'all, and to cloſe up all, thou ſhalt
'die ſhamefully. What thinkeſt
'thou of the loathſome ſtinking
'dungeon, the bloody ax, the
'burning fagot? Are they delight-
'full? Be wiſe at length, and keep
'thy life and honour; thou may'ſt
'live to do much good to good
'men, as God commands thee;
'thou mayeſt be an ornament to

'thy Country, and put caſe
'the Countries loſs would be of
'ſmall eſteem with thee, wilt
'thou bring thy friends alſo into
'danger? thou haſt begotten chil-
'dren, wilt thou now cut their
'throats, and inhumanely but-
'cher them, who may in time
'bring honour to their Country,
'glory to God, help and further-
'ance to his Church? go to the
'Legat, weak man, freely confeſs
'thy fault and help all theſe mi-
'ſeries. Thus did the cares of
this World, and the deceitfulneſs
of Riches, choak the good Seed
that was formerly ſown: ſo a
fearing, he faints, and yields unto
the allurements of this preſent
world; and being thus blinded
he goes to the Legat at *Venice*,
and ſalutes him with this
news.

Having for theſe divers years e
tertain

tertained an opinion concerning ſome Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthodox and received Judgement of the Church; and uttered many things againſt the authority of the Church of Rome, and the univerſal Biſhop, I humbly acknowledg my fault and error, and my folly in miſleading others; I therefore yield my ſelf in all obedience to the Supream Biſhop into the boſom of the Church of Rome, never to depart again from the Traditions and decrees of the holy See; I am heartily ſorry for what is paſt, and I humbly beg pardon for ſo great an offence.

The *Legat* perceiving *Spira* to faint, he purſues to the utmoſt; he cauſes a recitation of all his Errours to be drawn in Writing together with the Confeſſion annexed to it. And commands *Spira* to ſubſcribe his name there,

which accordingly he did; then the *Legate* commands him to return to his own Town, and there to declare this Confeſſion of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, to be holy, and true, and to abjure the Opinions of *Luther*, and other ſuch Teachers, as falſe and Heretical: 'Man knows the 'beginning of ſin, but who bounds 'the Iſſues thereof? *Spira* having once loſt footing, goes down a main, he cannot ſtay, nor gain-ſay the *Legate*, but promiſeth to accompliſh his whole will and pleaſure: he ſoon addreſſeth himſelf for his Journey: and being onward in the way, bethinks himſelf of the large ſpoils he had brought away, from the conflict with the *Legate*; what glorious teſtimony he had given of his great

great Faith and Conſtancy in Chriſts cauſe; and to be plain, how impiouſly he had denyed Chriſt, and his Goſpel at *Venice*; and what he promiſed to do further in his own Country: and thus, partly with fear and partly with ſhame, being confounded, he thought he heard a voyce ſpeaking unto him, in this manner.

'*Spira*, What doſt thou here? 'whither goeſt thou? haſt thou, 'unhappy man, given thy hand-'writing to the Legate at *Venice*? 'yet ſee thou doſt not ſeal it in 'thy own Country. Doſt thou 'indeed think eternal Life ſo 'mean, as that thou preferreſt 'this preſent life before it? doſt 'thou well in preferring wife 'and children before Chriſt? is 'the windy applauſe of the peo-

'ple, better indeed than the glo-
'ry of God? and the Poſſeſſion of
'this Worlds good more dear
'to thee, than the ſalvation of
'thine own ſoul? is the ſmall uſe
'of a moment of time more deſi-
'rable, than eternal wrath is
'dreadful? think with thy ſelf,
'what Chriſt endured for thy
'ſake, is it not equal thou ſhouldſt
'ſuffer ſomewhat for him? Re-
'member man, that the ſufferings
'of this preſent life are not com-
'parable to the glory that ſhall
'be revealed. If thou ſuffereſt
'with him, thou ſhalt alſo reign
'with him: thou canſt not an-
'ſwer for what thou haſt already
'done; nevertheleſs the gate of
'Mercy is not quite ſhut. Take
'heed that thou heapeſt not ſin
'upon ſin, leſt thou repent when
'it will be too late.

Now was *Spira* in a Wilder-
neſs

neſs of doubt, not knowing which way to turn him, nor what to do; yet being arrived in his own Country, and amongſt his friends, conſidering what he had done, and what he had further promiſed to do, and how the terrour of God on the one ſide, and the terrour of this World on the other ſide, did continually rack him; and therefore he deſired of them advice in this ſo doubtful a caſe: His friends, upon ſmall deliberation anſwered, that it was requiſite he ſhould take heed that he did not in any wiſe betray his wife and children, and all his friends, into danger: ſeeing, that by ſo ſmall a matter as the reciting of a little Scedule, which might be done in leſs ſpace than half an hour, he might both

free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depend upon him; adding moreover that he could get no credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part Performed before the *Legate* at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise, more than what by the former action already he had sustained; on the other side, if he did not perform his promise made to the *Legate*, he could neither discharge himself of the shame which he had already incurred, nor avoid farre more heavy and insupportable injuries, than probably he should have endured, if he had persisted obstinately in his former Opinions.

This

This was the laſt blow of the battle; and *Spira* utterly overcome, goes to the Prætor, and profers to perform his promiſe made to the *Legate*, who in the mean time, had taken order to have all things ready and had ſent the inſtrument of Abjuration ſigned by *Spira*, to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain Prieſt. All that night the miſerable man wears out with reſtleſs cares, without any minute of reſt; the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he deſperately enters into the publick Congregation, where Maſs being finiſhed, in the preſence of Friends and Enemies, and of the whole Aſſembly, being by eſtimation near two thouſand people, yea and of Heaven it ſelf, he recites

that

that infamous Abjuration, word for word as it was written: it being done, he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he preſently paid, five whereof were given to the Prieſt that brought the abjuration, the other twenty-five were imployed towards the making of a *Shrine* to put the *Euchariſt* in; then was he ſent home, reſtored to his Dignities, Goods, Wife, and Children: No ſooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a direful voice, ſaying to him, 'Thou 'wicked wretch, thou haſt denied 'me, thou haſt renounced the co-'venant of thy obedience, thou 'haſt broken thy vow; hence 'Apoſtate, bear with thee the 'ſentence of thy eternal damnati-'on; he trembling and quaking in body and mind, fell down in a ſwound:

ſwound: relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forward he never found any peace or eaſe of mind, but continuing in unceſſant torments, he proteſted that he was captived under the revenging hand of the great God, that he heard continually that fearful ſentence of Chriſt that juſt Judge, that he knew he was utterly undone; that he could neither hope for Grace, nor Chriſt's Interceſſion with God the Father in his behalf: thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and ever his Judgement before his eyes.

Now began his friends, ſome of them, to repent too late of their raſh counſell: others not looking ſo high as the Judgement of God, laid all the blame on his Melancholy

lick conſtitution; that overſhadowing his Judgement, wrought in him a kind of madneſs: every one cenſured as his fancy led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this to uſe both the wholeſom help of Phyſitians, and the pious advice of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an Univerſity of note, where plenty of all manner of means was to be had: this they accordingly did; both with his Wife, Children, and whole family: others alſo of his friends accompanying him; and being arrived at the houſe of one *James Ardin*, in Saint *Leonards* Pariſh, they ſent for three Phyſitians of moſt note, who upon due obſervations of the effects, and of other Symptoms of his diſeaſe, and

ſome

ſome private conference one with another, amongſt themſelves, returned their Verdict in this manner, *viz.* That they could not diſcern that his body was afflicted with any danger or diſtemper Originally from it ſelf, by reaſon of the over-ruling of any humour; but that this Malady of his did ariſe from ſome grief or paſſion of his mind, which being over-burdened did ſo oppreſs the ſpirits, as they wanting free paſſage, ſtirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full, and theſe aſcending up into the Brain, troubled the fancy, ſhadowed the ſeat of the judgment, and ſo corrupted it. This was the ſtate of his Diſeaſe, and that outward part that was viſible to the eye of nature; this they

~~ſible to the eye of nature~~; this they endeavoured to reform by purgation, either to conſume, or at leaſt to divert the courſe of thoſe humours from the brain; but all their skill effected nothing, which *Spira* noting, ſaid, 'Alas poor men! 'how far wide are you? do 'you think that this diſeaſe is 'to be Cured by potions? be-'lieve me there muſt be ano-'ther manner of medicine; 'it is neither plaiſter nor drugs, 'that can help a fainting ſoul 'caſt down with the ſence of ſin, 'and wrath of God; 'tis onely 'Chriſt that muſt be the Phyſi-'tian and the Goſpel the Souls 'Antidote.

The Phyſicians eaſily believed him, after they had underſtood the whole truth of the

the matter, and therefore they wiſhed him to ſeek ſome ſpiritual comfort. By this time the fame of this man was ſpread over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Country; partly for that he was a man of Eſteem; partly becauſe as the diſeaſe, ſo the occaſion was eſpecially remarkable; for this was not done in a corner; ſo as dayly there came multitudes of all ſorts to ſee him; ſome out of curioſity, onely to ſee and diſcourſe; ſome out of a pious deſire to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again: or at leaſt to benefit themſelves by ſuch a ſpectacle of Miſery, and of the Juſtice of God. Amongſt theſe *Paulus Vergerius*, Biſhop of *Juſtinopolis* and *Mattheus Gribauldus*, deſerve eſpecially to be

be named as the moſt principall labourers for this mans comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconſtant head-ſtrong paſſion of youth, but in the ſtrength of his Experience and Judgement; in a burning heat, calling exceſſively for drink, yet his underſtanding active, quick of apprehenſion, witty in diſcourſe above his ordinary manner, and judiciouſly appoſite; his Friends laboured with him by all fair means to receive ſome nouriſhment, which he obſtinately gain-ſaying, they forcibly infuſed ſome liquid ſuſtenance into his mouth, moſt of which he ſpit out again, exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, ſaid

ſaid, 'As it is true that all 'things work for the beſt to 'thoſe that love God; ſo to 'the wicked all are contrary: 'for whereas a plentiful Off-'ſpring is the Bleſſing of God, 'and his reward, being a ſtay 'to the weak eſtate of their 'aged parents, to me they are 'a cauſe of bitterneſs and vexa-'tion; they do ſtrive to make 'me tire out this miſery; I 'would fain be at an end; I 'deſerve not this dealing at 'their hands; Oh! that I were 'gone from hence, that ſome 'body would let out this weary 'Soul.

His friends ſaluted him, and asked him, what he conceived to be the cauſe of his Diſeaſe; forthwith he brake out into a lamentable diſcourſe of the paſſages formerly related, and that

that with ſuch paſſionate Elocution, that he cauſed many to weep, and moſt to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many of God's promiſes recorded in the Scripture, and many examples of God's Mercy: 'My ſin '(ſaid he) is greater than the 'Mercy of God. Nay anſwered they, The Mercy of God is above all ſin; God would have all men 'to be ſaved; It's true (quoth 'he) he would have all that he 'hath elected to be ſaved; he 'would not have damned Repro-'bates to be ſaved: I am one of 'that number, I know it, for I 'willingly and againſt my know-'ledge denied Chriſt, and I feel 'that he hardens, and will not 'ſuffer me to hope.

After ſome ſilence, one aſked him, whether he did not believe

believe that Doctrine to be true, for which he was accuſed before the *Legate*? He anſwered 'I did believe it when I denied it, 'but now I neither believe that, 'nor the Doctrine of the Roman 'Church: I believe nothing, I 'have no faith, no truſt, no hope; 'I am a Reprobate like *Cain* or '*Judas*, who caſting away all hope 'of mercy, fell into deſpair; and 'my friends do me great Wrong, 'that they ſuffer me not to go to 'the place of Unbelievers, as I 'juſtly deſerve.

Here they began ſharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him, that in any wiſe he did not violate the Mercy of God, to which he anſwered, 'The Mercy of God is exceed-'ing large, and extends to all 'the Elect, but not to me, or any 'like to me, who are ſealed up 'to

'to wrath; I tell you I deserve it, 'my own conscience condemns 'me, what needeth any other 'Judge? Christ came (say they) to take away sin, *Rom.* 2. 15. and calling for a Book, they read unto him the Passion of Christ; and coming to his nailing to the Cross, *Spira* said, 'This indeed 'is comfortable to such as are 'Elected, but as for me Wretch, 'they are nothing but grief and 'torment, because I contemned 'them. Thus roaring for grief, and tossing himself up and down upon the bed as he lay, he entreated them to read no more. As *Gribauldus*, was coming to see him, *Vergerius* said to *Spira*, Dear Sir, here is Doctor *Gribauldus*, a godly and faithfull friend of yours, come to see you. He is welcome (said he) but he shall find me

me ill : *Gribauldus* replyed, Sir, This is but an illuſion of the Devil, who doth what he can to vex you; but turn you to God with your whole heart, and he is ready to ſhew you Mercy; the Lord you know is full of Mercy, it is he that hath ſaid, *that as often as a ſinner repents of his ſin, he will remember his ſin no more.* Conſider this in the example of *Peter*, that was Chriſts familiar, and an Apoſtle, and yet denyed him thrice with an Oath, and yet God was merciſull unto him : Conſider the Thief that ſpent his whole life in Wickedneſs, and for all that, did not God graciouſly reſpect him in the laſt minute of his Life? Is the Lord's hand now ſhortned that it cannot ſave? To this *Spira* anſwered:

If

'If *Peter* grieved and repented,
'it was becauſe Chriſt beheld
'him with a merciful eye: and
'in that he was pardoned, it was
'not becauſe he wept but be-
'cauſe God was gracious to him:
'but God reſpects not me, and
'therefore I am a Reprobate;
'feel no comfort can enter into
'my heart; there's place there
'onely for torments and vexings
'of ſpirit; I tell you my caſe is
'properly mine own, no man
'was ever in the like plight, and
'therefore my Eſtate is fearful.
Then roaring out in the bit-
terneſs of his ſpirit, ſaid, *It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*; the vio-
lence of his Paſſion and Action ſuitable, did amaze many of the Beholders; inſomuch as ſome of them ſaid with a whiſpering voice, that he was poſſeſſed

poſſeſſed; he over-hearing it, ſaid, 'Do you doubt it? I have a 'whole legion of Devils that take 'up their dwelling within me, 'and poſſeſs me as their own; 'and juſtly too, for I have denied 'Chriſt. Whether did you that willingly or not? (ſaid they) 'That's nothing to the purpoſe '(ſaid *Spira*) Chriſt ſaith whoſo-'ever denies me before men, him 'will I deny before my Father 'which is in Heaven; Chriſt 'will not be denied, no not in a 'word; and therefore it is enough, 'though in heart I never denied 'him.

They obſerving his diſtemper ariſe from the ſenſe and horror of the pains of Hell, asked him whether he thought there were worſe pains than what he endured for the preſent, he ſaid, That he knew there were far worſe pains than

'thoſe that he then ſuffered, for 'the wicked ſhall riſe to their 'judgement, but they ſhall not 'ſtand in judgement, (*Pſal.* 1.) 'this I tremble to think of, yet 'do I deſire nothing more than 'that I might come to that place 'where I may be ſure to feel the 'worſt, and to be freed from fear 'of worſe to come.

I, but you are to conſider (ſaid one) that thoſe Opinions for which you were accuſed before the *Legate*, were impious, and therefore you are not to think you denied Chriſt, but rather that you confeſſed him, acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholick Church. 'Truly '(ſaid he) when I did deny thoſe 'Opinions, I did think them 'to be true, and yet I did deny 'them.

Go to (ſaid others) now then

then believe that they are true. 'Now I cannot (ſaid he) God 'will not ſuffer me to believe 'them, nor truſt in his Mercy; 'what would you have me to 'do? I would fain attain to this 'power, but cannot, though I 'ſhould preſently be burnt for 'it. But why do you (ſaid the other) eſteem this ſo grievous a ſin, when as the learned *L-gat* conſtrained you to it; which he ſurely would not have done, if your former Opinions had not been Erroneous? No, good *Francis*, the Devil beſets thee, let not therefore the grievouſneſs of thy ſin (if any ſuch be) amaze thee. You ſay right (replyed he) the Devil hath poſſeſt me, and God hath left me to his power; for I find I can neither believe the Goſpel, nor truſt in God's Mercy,

'I have ſinned againſt the Holy
'Ghoſt, and God by his immuta-
'ble decree hath bound me over
'to perpetual puniſhment with-
'out any hope of pardon. It's true
'that the greatneſs of ſin, nor the
'multitude of them, bind not
'God's Mercy; all thoſe ſins that
'in the former part of my life I
'have commited then did not
'ſo much trouble me, for I truſt-
'ed God would not lay them to
'my charge: now having ſin'd a-
'gainſt the holy Ghoſt, God hath
'taken away from me all power
'of repentance, and brings all my
'ſins to remembranee; and guilty
'of one guilty of all. And there-
'fore it is no matter whether my
'ſins be great or ſmall, few or ma-
'ny; they be ſuch as Chriſts blood
'nor God's Mercy belongs not
'to me: God will have Mercy on
'whom he will have Mercy; and
whom

'whom he will he hardeneth; 'this is it that gnaws my heart, 'he hath hardned me; and I 'find that he daily more and 'more doth harden me, and 'therefore I am out of hope; I 'feel it, therefore cannot but 'deſpair: I tell you there was ne-'ver ſuch a Monſter as I am, ne-'ver was any man alive a ſpecta-'cle of exceeding miſery. I know 'that juſtification is to be expe-'cted by Chriſt, and I denied and 'abjured it, to the end I might 'keep this frail life from adver-'ſity, and my children from po-'verty: and now behold how 'bitter this life is to me, and God 'onely knows what ſhall become 'of this my Family; but ſure no 'good is likely to betide it, but 'worſe and worſe, and ſuch a 'ruin at length, as one ſtone 'ſhall not be left upon another.

But why ſhould you (ſaid *Gribauldus*) conceit ſo deeply of your ſin, ſeeing you cannot but know, that many have denied Chriſt, yet never fell into Deſpair? 'Well (ſaid he) I can ſee 'no ground of comfort for 'ſuch, neither can I warrant 'them from God's revenging 'hand in wrath, though it pleaſeth God yet to ſuffer ſuch to 'be in peace: and beſides, there 'will a time of danger come, and 'then they ſhall be thorowly 'tried; and if it were not ſo, yet 'God is juſt in making me an 'Example to others, and I cannot 'juſtly complain; there is no 'puniſhment ſo great but I have 'deſerved it; for this ſo heinous 'offence. I aſſure you it is no 'ſmall matter to deny Chriſt, 'and yet it is more ordinary than 'commonly men do conceive of,

'it

'it is not a denial made before a 'Magiſtrate as it is with me, for 'as oft as a Chriſtian doth diſ-'ſemble the known truth, as of-'ten as he approves of falſe wor-'ſhip by preſenting himſelf at it, 'ſo often as he doth not things 'worthy of his calling, or doth 'ſuch things as are unworthy of 'his calling, ſo often he denies 'Chriſt; thus did I, and therefore 'am juſtly puniſhed for it. Your Eſtate (quoth *Gribauldus*) is not ſo ſtrange as you make it: *Job* was ſo far gone, that he complained God had ſet him as a mark againſt him; and *David* that was a man after God's own heart, complained often that God had forſaken him, and was become his Enemy; yet both received comfort again. Comfort your ſelf therefore, God will come at length, though

he now ſeem far off.

'O Brother (anſwered *Spira*) I 'believe all this, the Devils be- 'lieve and tremble; but *David* 'was ever Elected and dearly be- 'loved of God; and though he 'fell, yet God took not utterly a- 'way his holy Spirit, and there- 'fore was heard when he prayed, *Lord take not thy Holy Spirit from me:* 'but I am in another 'caſe, being ever accurſed from 'the preſence of God; neither can 'I pray as he did, becauſe his holy 'Spirit is quite gone, and cannot 'be recalled; and therefore I know 'I ſhall live in continual hardneſs 'ſo long as I live, Oh! that I might 'feel but the leaſt ſenſe of the love 'of God to me, though but for 'one ſmall moment as I now feel 'his heavy wrath that burns like 'torments of Hell within me, and 'afflicts my conſcience with pangs 'unuttera-

'unutterable: verily Deſparation 'is Hell it ſelf.

Here *Gribauldus* ſaid, I do verily believe, *Spira*, that God having ſo ſeverely chaſtiſed you in this life, correcteth you in Mercy here, that he may ſpare you hereafter, and that he hath Mercy ſealed up for you in time to come.

'Nay (ſaid *Spira*) hence do I 'know that I am a Reprobate, be-'cauſe he afflicteth me with hard-'neſs of heart: O that my body 'had ſuffered all my life long, ſo 'that he would be pleaſed to re-'leaſe my ſoul, and eaſe my conſci-'ence, this burdened conſcience.

Gribauldus being deſirous to eaſe his mind from the continual meditation of his ſins; as alſo to ſound how for the preſent he ſtood affected to the Romiſh Church, asked him

what he thought became of the ſouls of men ſo ſoon as they departed out of the body, to which he anſwered:

'Although this be not ſo fully 'revealed in Scripture, yet I veri-'ly believe that the ſouls of the 'Elect go preſently to the King-'dom of glory, and not that they 'ſleep with the body, as ſome do 'imagine:

Very well, ſaid one of the Spectators, why do the Scriptures then ſay (*1 Sam.* 5. 9.) that God brings down to Hell, and raiſeth up, ſeeing it cannot be meant of the eſtate of the ſoul after death which as thou ſayeſt either goeth to Heaven without change, or to Hell without Redemption; it muſt be underſtood of the Eſtate of the ſoul in this life, like that wherein thou art at this preſent: and often

oftentimes we ſee that God ſuffers men to fall into the jaws of Deſpair, and yet raiſeth them up again; and therefore deſpair not, but hope; it ſhall be even thus with thee in his good time.

'This is the work (quoth *Spira*) 'this is the labour; for I tell you, 'when I at *Venice* did firſt abjure 'my profeſſion, and ſo, as it were, 'drew an Indenture, the Spirit of 'God often admoniſhed me, and 'when at *Cittadella* I did as it 'were ſet my ſeal, the Spirit 'of God often ſuggeſted to me, do 'not write, *Spira*, do not ſeal: yet 'reſiſted the holy Ghoſt, and did 'both, and at that very preſent I 'did evidently feel a wound in-'flicted in my very Will: ſo al-'though I can ſay, I would believe 'yet can I not ſay, I will believe. 'God hath denied me the power

of

'of will, and it befalls me in this
'my miſerable Eſtate, as with one
'that is faſt in Irons, and his
'friends coming to ſee him, do
'pitty his Eſtate, and do perſwade
'him to ſhake of his fetters, and
'to come out of his bonds, which
'God knows he would fain do,
'but cannot; this is my very caſe,
'you perſwade me to believe, how
'fain would I do it, but cannot,
'O now I cannot. Then violent-
ly graſping his hands toge-
ther, and raiſing himſelf up,
'Behold (ſaid he) I am ſtrong,
'yet by little and little I decay &
'conſume, and my ſervants would
'fain preſerve this weary life,
'but at length the will of God
'muſt de done, and I ſhall periſh
'miſerably, as I deſerve: Rejoyce
'ye righteous in the Lord, bleſſed
'are you whoſe hearts the Lord
'hath mollified.

Then

Then after ſome pauſe, 'It's 'wonderful, I earneſtly deſire to 'pray to God with my heart, 'yet I cannot; I ſee my dam-'nation, and I know my reme-'dy is onely in Chriſt, yet I can-'not ſet my ſelf to take hold on 'it: ſuch are the puniſhments of 'the damned; they repent of 'their loſs of Heaven, they can-'not mend their ways.

As he was thus ſpeaking, he obſerved divers Flies that came about him, and ſome lighted on him; 'Behold, (ſaid he,) now al-'ſo *Belzeebub* comes to his Ban-'quet; you ſhall ſhortly ſee my 'end, and in me an example to 'many, of the Juſtice and Judg-'ment of God.

About this time came in two Biſhops, with divers Scho-

Scholars of the Univerſity, one of them being *Paulus Vergerius*, having obſerved *Spira* more than any other, being continually converſant with him, told him his Eſtate was ſuch as rather ſtood in need of Prayer than Advice; and therefore deſired him to pray with him in the Lords Prayer: *Spira* conſented, and he began;

[*Our Father which art in Heaven*] then breaking forth into tears, he ſtopped; but they ſaid, It is well, your grief is a good ſign. 'I bewail (ſaid he) my mi-'ſery, for I perceive I am forſaken 'of God, and cannot call to him 'from my heart, as I was wont to do: Yet let us go on ſaid *Vergerius*.

[*Thy Kingdom come*] O Lord '(ſaid *Spira*) bring me alſo into 'this Kingdom; I beſeceh thee ſhut

'ſhut me not out. Then coming to thoſe words [*Give us this day our daily bread*] he added, 'O 'Lord I have enough, and abun-'dance to feed this carcaſs of 'mine; but there is another bread 'I humbly beg, the bread of thy 'Grace without which I know I 'am but a dead man.

[*Lead us not into temptation*] 'ſeeing Lord, that I am brought 'into temptation, help me, Lord, 'that I may eſcape; the Enemy 'hath overcome; help me, I be-'ſeech thee, to overcome this cru-'el Tyrant.

Theſe things he ſpake with a mournful voice, the tears trickling down abundantly; and expreſſing ſuch affections and paſſion, as turned the bowels of thoſe there preſent with grief and compunction: they then turning to *Spira*, ſaid, You know

know that none can call *Chriſt Jeſus* the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt: you muſt therefore think of your ſelf, according to that ſoft affection, which you expreſs in your prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly caſt you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

" I perceive, ſaid *Spira*, that I call on him to my eternal damnation, for I tell you again, It is a new and unheard of example, that you find in me. If *Judas* (ſaid they) had but outlived his days, which by nature he might have done, he might have repented, and Chriſt would have received him to Mercy; and yet he ſinned moſt grievouſly againſt his Maſter, which did ſo eſteem of him, as to honour him with the dignity of an Apoſtle, and did maintain and

and feed him. He anſwered, Chriſt did alſo feed and honour me, neither yet is my fault one jot leſs than that of his, becauſe it is no more honour to be perſonally preſent with Chriſt in the fleſh, than to be in his preſence now by illumination of his holy Spirit: and beſides I deny that ever *Judas* could have repented how long ſoever he had lived: for grace was quite taken from him, as it is now from me.

O *Spira*, ſaid they, You know you are in a ſpiritual deſertion, you muſt therefore not believe what Satan ſuggeſts, he was ever a lier from the beginning, and a meer Impoſtor, and will caſt a thouſand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withall, you muſt rather believe

lieve thoſe whom you judge to be in a good eſtate, and more able to diſcern of you than your ſelf: believe us, and we tell you, That God will be mercifull unto you.

'There is the knot (ſaid *Spi-*
'*ra*) would I could believe, but I
'cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and viſions he was continually troubled withall: that he ſaw the Devils come flocking into the Chamber, and about his Bed, terrifying him with ſtrange noiſes; that theſe were not fancies, but that he ſaw them as really as the ſtanders by: and that beſides theſe outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his mind, and a continual butchery of his Conſcience, being the very proper pangs

pangs of the damned wights in Hell.

Caſt away theſe fancies (ſaid *Gribauldus*) theſe are but illuſions: humble your ſelf in the preſence of God, and praiſe him. 'The dead praiſe not 'the Lord (anſwered he) nor 'they that go down into the 'pit. We that are drowned in 'Deſpair are dead, and already 'gone down into the pit; what 'Hell can there be worſe than 'Deſperation, or what greater 'puniſhment? The gnawing 'worm, Unquenchable Fire, 'Horror, Confuſion and (which 'is worſe than all) Deſperation 'it ſelf continually tortures me, 'and now I count my preſent 'eſtate worſe, than if my Soul 'ſeparated from my body were 'with *Judas*, and the reſt of the 'damned, and therefore, now

'deſire

'desire rather to be there, than
'thus to live in the body.

One being present, repeated certain words out of the Psalms;
'If thy children forsake my Law
'and walk not in my Judgments;
'I will visit their transgressions,
'with rods, and their iniquity
'with stripes; nevertheless my
'loving kindness I will not ut-
'terly take from them, nor suffer
'my faithfulness to fail. Mark this, O *Spira*, My Covenat I will not break.

"These Promises (said *Spira*) belong onely to the Elect, which if tempted, may fall into sin, bnt are again lifted np and recovered out: as the Prophet saith, Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him, therefore *Peter* could rise, for he was elected; but the

the Reprobate when they fall, cannot riſe again, as appears in *Cain*, *Saul*, and *Judas*, God deals one way wiah the Elect, and another with Reprobates.

The next day he prayed with them in the Latin-Tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly appeared. Bleſſed be God, ſaid *Vergerius*, theſe are no ſigns of eternal Reprobation; you muſt not, O *Spira*, ſeek out the ſecret Counſels of God's Election and Reprobation; for no man can know, ſo long as he lives, whether by his good or bad deeds, he be worthy of Gods love or anger: do you not know that the Prophet *David* complained, that God had caſt off his ſoul?

'I know all this, quoth *Spira*, I 'know the mercies of God are infi-'nite, and do ſurpaſs the ſins of the whole

'whole world, and that they are
'effectual to all that believe, but
'this faith, and this hope is the
'gift of God: O that he would
'give it me! but it is as impoſſible
'as to drink up the Sea at a draft:
'as for that of *Solomon*, if he had
'ever taſted that which I feel by
'woſull experience, he would ne-
'ver have ſpoken as he did, but
'the truth is, never had mortall
'man ſuch an evident experience
'of Gods anger and hatred againſt
'him, as I have. You that are in
'good eſtate, think Repentance &
'Faith to be a work of great faci-
'lity: and therefore you think it
'an eaſy matter to perſwade men
'to believe: the whole need not
'the Phyſitian, and he that is well
'can ſoon give counſel to ſuch as
'are ill: but this is the Hell to me,
'my heart is hardned, I cannot be-
'lieve, many are called, but few
'are choſen. Upon

Upon what ground (ſaid they) do you conceive ſo ill an opinion of your ſelf?

'I once did know God to be 'my Father, not onely by Crea-'tion, but by Regeneration; I 'knew him by his beloved Son, 'the Author, and finiſher of our 'Salvation; I could pray to him, 'and hope for pardon of ſin from 'him; I had a taſt of his ſweet-'neſs, peace, and comfort; now 'contrarily, I know God, not as 'a Father, but as an Enemy: 'what more? my heart hates 'God, and ſeeks to get above 'him, I have nothing elſe to fly to 'but Terror and Deſpair.

Belike you think then (ſaid they) that thoſe who have the earneſt and firſt fruits of God's Spirit, may notwithſtanding fall away.

The judgments of God are a deep

deep Abyſs, ſaid he, we are ſoon drowned if we enter into them; He that thinketh he ſtandeth, let him take heed leſt he fall, as for my ſelf, I know I am fallen back, and that I once did know the truth, though it may not be ſo throughly; I know not what to ſay, but that I am one of that number which God hath threatned to tear in pieces.

Say not ſo, anſwered they, for God may come, though at the laſt hour; keep hold therefore at the laſt by Hope.

This, quoth he, is my caſe; I tell you I cannot, God hath deprived me of Hope, this brings terror to my mind, and pines this body which now is ſo weak, as it cannot perform the ſeveral Offices thereof: for as the Elect have the Spirit teſtifying that they are the ſons of God

God, ſo the Reprobates, even while they live do often feel a worm in their conſciences, whereby they are condemned already: and therefore as I perceived this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I knew that I wanted the gifts of ſaving grace, and that I was utterly undone. God chaſtneth his Children with temporary afflictions, that they may come as Gold out of the fire; but puniſheth the wicked with blindneſs in their underſtandings, and hardneſs of heart; and wo be to ſuch from whom God takes his holy Spirit.

Here one rebuked him, and told him he gave too much credit to ſenſe, that he was not to believe himſelf, but rather him that was in a good eſtate; and I teſtifie to you (ſaid he) that God will be merciful to you.

'Nay answered he, for because
'I am in this ill Estate, therefore
'can I believe nothing but what
'is contrary to my Salvation and
'comfort; but you that are so con-
'fident of your good Estate, look
'that it be true, for it is no such
'small matter to be assured of sin-
'cerity; a man had need be excee-
'ding strongly grounded in the
'truth before he can be able to af-
'firm such a matter as ye now do,
'Its not the performance of a few
'formal duties, but a mighty con-
'stant labour, with all intention of
'heart and affection, with full
'desire and endeavour continual-
'ly to set forth God's glory; there
'must be neither fear of Legators,
'Inquisitors, prisons, nor any death
'whatsoever; many think them-
'selves happy, that are not, it is
'not every one that saith Lord,
'Lord, that shall go to Heaven.

They

They came another day, and found him with his eyes ſhut, as if he had been drowzie and very loath to diſcourſe; at which time there came in alſo a grave man from *Cittadella*, who demanded of *Spira*, if he knew him or not? He lifting up his eye-lids, and not ſuddenly remembring him, the man ſaid to him, *I am Presbyter Antonie Fontamia*, I was with you at *Venice*, ſome 8 weeks ſince; 'O 'curſed day ſaid *Spira*! Oh cur- 'ſed day!, Oh that I had never 'gone thither! Would God I had 'then died.

Afterwards came in a Prieſt, called *Bernardius Sardonius*, bringing with him a Book of Exorciſms to conjure this Devil; whom when *Spira* ſaw, ſhaking his head he ſaid:

'I am verily Perſwaded indeed

'that God hath left me to the 'power of the Devil: but ſuch 'they are, as are not to be found 'in your Litany; neither will 'they be caſt out by ſpells. The Prieſt proceeding in his intended purpoſes, with a ſtrange and uncouth geſture, and a loud voice, adjured the ſpirit to come into *Spira's* tongue, and to anſwer: *Spira* deriding his fruitleſs labour, with a ſigh, turned from him: a Biſhop being there preſent, ſaid to *Spira*, brother, God hath put virtue into the Word and Sacraments; and we have uſed the one means and find not that effect which we deſire; ſhall we try the efficacy of the Sacraments? ſurely if you take it as a true Chriſtian ought to receive the Body and Blood of Chriſt, it will prove a ſoveraign medicine for your ſick Soul.

'This

'This I cannot do (anſwered 'he) for thoſe that have no right 'to the Promiſes, have no right 'to the Seals. The Euchariſt was 'appointed only for believers, if 'we have no faith, we eat & drink 'judgment to our ſelves I receiv'd 'it about a month ſince, but I 'did not well in ſo doing; for I 'took it by conſtraint, and ſo I 'took it to my deeper Condem-'nation.

Here *Vergerius* began to importune him earneſtly to beware that he did not wilfully reſiſt grace, and put himſelf out of Heaven, charging him vehemently, by all the love that was between them, by the love that he bare to his children, yea to his own ſoul, that he would ſet himſelf ſeriouſly to return to that Faith and Hope, which once he had

in the death of Chriſt; with many ſuch like words. *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly, and being ſomewhat moved ſaid, You do but repeat *Vergerius*, what ſhould I hope? why ſhould I believe? God hath taken Faith from me; ſhew me then whither I ſhall go, ſhew me a Heaven whereto I ſhall retire. You tell me of God's Mercy, when as God hath caſt me off, you tell me of Chriſts interceſſion, I have denied him; you command me to believe, I ſay, I cannot; you bring me no comfort, your command is as impoſſible for me to obey, as to keep Moral Law: if you ſhould Perſwade one to love God with all his heart, ſoul, and ſtrength, and God gives him not power, can he perform your deſire? Doth not the Church teach us to ſing, 'Di-

'rect

'rect us, O Lord, to keep thy Com-
'mandments? Hypocrites ſay they
'love God with all their heart,
'but they lie; for my part I will
'not lie, but tell you plainly, ſuch
'is my caſe, that tho you ſhould
'never ſo much importune me to
'hope or believe, though I deſire it
'yet I cannot, for God as a puniſh-
'ment of my wickedneſs hath ta-
'ken away from me all his ſaving
'graces, Faith, Hope, and all: I am
'not the man therefore that you
'take me for: Belike you think I
'delight in this Eſtate; if I could
'conceive but the leaſt ſpark of
'hope of a better Eſtate hereafter,
'I would not refuſe to endure the
'moſt heavy weight of the wrath
'of that great God, yea for
'20000 years, ſo that I might at
'length attain to the end of that
'miſery, which I now know will
'be eternal; But I tell you, my will

is wounded, who longs more to believe than I do? But all the ground-work of hope is gone, for if the Teſtimonies of the holy Scripture be true (as they are certainly true) is not this as true, Whoſoever denies me before men, him ſaith Chriſt will I deny before my Father which is in heaven? is not this juſtly my caſe as if it had been intended againſt this very perſon of mine? And I pray you what ſhall become of ſuch as Chriſt denieth, ſeeing there is no other name under heaven whereby you look to be ſaved? What ſaith St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews*? It is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightned, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the holy Ghoſt, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance: what can be more plain againſt

againſt me? is not that Scripture alſo; if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a looking for of judgement: the Scripture ſpeaks of me, *St. Paul* meets me, Saint *Peter* tells me, it had been better I had never known the way of Righteouſneſs, than after I have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment, it had been better I had not known, and yet then my condemnation had been moſt certain; do you not ſee evidently, that I have wilfully denyed the known truth? I may juſtly expect not only damnation, but worſe if worſe may be imagined, God will have me undergoe the juſt puniſhment of my ſin, and make me an Example of his Wrath for your ſakes.

The Company preſent admired his diſcourſe, ſo grievouſly accuſing himſelf of his fore-paſt life, ſo gravely and wiſely dilating concerning the Judgements of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not Frenzie or Madneſs that had poſſeſſed him, and being as it were in admiration of his Eſtate, *Spira* proceeded again in this manner. 'Take 'heed to your ſelves, it is 'no light or eaſie matter to be a 'Chriſtian; it is not Baptiſm, 'or reading of the Scriptures 'or boaſting of Faith in Chriſt, '(though even theſe are good) 'that can prove one to be an 'abſolute Chriſtian: you know 'what I ſaid before, There 'muſt be a conformity in Life, 'A Chriſtian muſt be ſtrong, 'unconquerable, not carrying an

an obſcure profeſſion, but reſolve, expreſſing the image of Chriſt, and holding out againſt all oppoſition to the laſt breath, he muſt give all diligence, by Righteouſnes and Holineſs, to make his Calling and Election ſure. Many there are that ſnatch at the Promiſes in the Goſpel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet they remain ſluggiſh, and careleſs; and being flattered by the things of this preſent world, they paſs in their courſe in quietneſs and ſecurity, as if they were the onely happy men; whom nevertheleſs the Lord in his providence hath ordained to eternal wrath, as you may ſee in Saint *Lukes* Rich Man. Thus it was with me, therefore take ye heed.

Then

Then came one of his Nephews, and offered him ſome ſuſtenance, which he diſdainfully refuſing, ſo moved the young mans Choler, that he charged him with hypocriſie and diſſimulation, or frenzy; to whom *Spira*, gravely anſwering ſaid,

You may interpret the matter as you will: but I am ſure I am not onely the Actor, but the Argument and matter of the Tragedie, I would it were frenzy either fained or true, for if it were frenzy I could put it off at pleaſure; If it were a real frenzy, yet there were ſome hope left of Gods mercy, whereas now there is none. For I know God has pronounced me an enemy and guilty of high treaſon againſt his Majeſty; I am a caſtaway, a veſſel of his wrath: yet dare

dare you call it diſſembling and frenzy? and can you mock at the formidable example of the heavy Wrath of God, that ſhould teach you fear and terror? But it is natural to the fleſh, either out of malice or ignorance, to ſpeak perverſly of the works of God. The natural man diſcerneth not the things that be of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

How can this be (ſaid *Gribaldus*) that you can thus excellently diſcourſe of the judgment of God, and of the graces of his holy Spirit, what you find the want of them, and earneſtly deſire them; and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them?

Take this for certain (ſaid he) want the main grace of all, and that which is abſolute neceſſary, and God doth many times extort moſt

'moſt true and ſtrange teſtimo-
'nies of his Majeſty, Juſtice and
'mercy; yea out of the mouths of
'very Reprobates: for even *Judas*,
'after he had betray'd his Maſter
'was conſtrained to confeſs his
'ſin, and to juſtify the Innocency
'of Chriſt, therefore if I do the
'like, it is no new or ſtrange mat-
'ter. God hath taken Faith from
'me, aud left me other common
'gifts, for my deeper condemna-
'tion: By how much the more I
'remember what I had, and hear
'others diſcourſe of what they
'have, by ſo much the more is my
'torment, in that I know what I
'want, and how there is no way
'to be relieved.

Thus ſpake he, the tears all the while trickling down; profeſſing that his pangs were ſuch, as that the damned Wights in Hell endure not the like Miſery; that

that his eſtate was worſe than that of *Cain* or *Judas*, and therefore he deſired to die. *Yet behold (ſaid he) the ſcriptures are accompliſhed in me, They ſhall deſire to die, & Death ſhall fly from them.* And verily he ſeem'd exceedingly to fear, leſt his life ſhould be drawn out yet longer; finding no eaſe or reſt ever and anon, cried out, *O miſerable wretch, O miſerable wretch,* then turning to the Company, he beſought them in this manner.

'O Brethren! take a diligent 'heed to your life; make more 'account of the gifts of Gods 'Spirit than I have done; learn 'to beware of my miſery; think 'not you are aſſured Chriſtians, 'becauſe you underſtand ſome-'thing of the Goſpel; take 'heed you grow not ſecure on 'that ground; be conſtant and 'immoveable in the maintenance of

of your profeſſion: Confeſs even until death, if you be called thereto; he that loveth Father and Mother, brothers, ſiſters, ſons, daughters, kindreds, houſes, lands, more than Chriſt, is not worthy of him.

Theſe words (ſaid they) do not ſound like the words of a wicked Reprobate.

'I do but here imitate (ſaith '*Spira*) the rich glutton in the Goſpel, who tho in Hell was carefull that his brethren ſhould not come to that place of torment: And I ſay to you brethren, Take heed of this miſerable eſtate wherein I am.

Then turning himſelf to certain young men that were preſent, he deſired them to conceive him aright. 'I do not ſpeak 'this to derogate from the cer-'tainty of ſaving Faith, and the 'Promiſes of the Goſpel, for they

'they are moſt ſure; but take 'heed of relying on that 'Faith that works not a holy 'and unblameable life, worthy 'of a believer; credit me, It will 'fail, I have tried it, I preſumed 'I had gotten the right Faith; I 'preached it to others, I had all 'places of Scripture in memory 'that might ſupport it, I thought 'my ſelf ſure, and in the mean 'time living impiouſly and care-'leſly, behold now the judge-'ment of God hath overtaken 'me not to correction, but to 'condemnation: And now you 'would have me to beleive, but 'it will not be, for I feel too late 'that good things belong only 'to ſuch as are good, whoſe ſins 'are covered with Chriſt's death 'and blood, as with a veil, and 'guarded with his righteous merits

'merits from the flood of Gods 'wrath, even as with a mighty 'wall, leſt miſerable mortals 'ſhould be ſwallowed up with 'the greatneſs of their ſin: but as 'for me, I have, as it were wil-'fully with my hands, pulled, 'down this Rampire, behind 'which I might have reſted in 'ſafety; and now are the ſwelling 'Waters come even to my ſoul; 'and I am caſt away.

One of his familiar Friends chanced to ſay, That certainly he was overcome with melancholy which being over-heard, *Spira* anſwered.

'Well, be it ſo, ſeeing you will 'needs have it ſo; thus alſo is Gods 'wrath manifeſted againſt me, in 'that he hath taken from me the 'uſe of mine Underſtanding and 'Reaſon, ſo as I can neither rightly 'eſteem & judg of my diſtemper, nor

'nor hope of remedy. You ſee Bre-
'thren what a dangerous thing it
'is to ſtop or ſtay in things that
'concern Gods glory, eſpecially to
'diſſemble upon any terms: What
'a fearful thing is it to be near and
'almoſt a Chriſtian? never was the
'like example to this of mine, and
'therefore if you be wiſe, you will
'ſeriouſly conſider thereof: O that
'God would let looſe his hand
'from me, that it were with me
'now as in times paſt, I would
'ſcorn all threats of the moſt cruel
'Tyrants, bear toments with in-
'vincible reſolution, and glory in
'the outward profeſſion of Chriſt,
'till I were choaked in the flame
'and my body conſumed to aſhes.

You ſay, you are deſperate, O *Spira*! (ſaid they) why then do you not ſtrive with ſome weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as deſpe-

deſperate men uſe to do? 'Let 'me have a ſword (ſaid *Spira*) Why what would you do with it (quoth they?) 'I cannot tell 'you (ſaid he) what this mind 'would move me to, upon occaſi-'on, nor what I would do.

They perceiving ſmall effect of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worſe, for the avoiding of concourſe of people; for every day ſeldome fewer than twenty continued with him, and to ſtop the courſe of fame which was continually blown abroad of him, they conſult to carry him back again into his own Country; and thoſe his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him; *Vergerius* amongſt the reſt, required that at their parting hey might pray together with him,

him, *Spira* hardly conſented, and as unwillingly performed, for he ſaid, 'My heart is 'eſtranged from God, I cannot 'call him Father from my heart; 'all good motions are now quite 'gone, my heart is full of male-'diction, hatred, and blaſphemy 'againſt God: I find I grow 'more & more hardned in heart, 'and cannot ſtop nor help my 'ſelf? your prayers for me ſhall 'turn to your own profit, they can 'do me not good.

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom *Spira* embracing, ſaid, 'Although I know 'that nothing can bring any bene-'fit to me a Reprobate; but that 'every thing ſhall tend to my dee-'per condemnation; yet I give you 'moſt hearty thanks for your kind 'office of the love and good will; 'and the Lord return it unto you

'you, with a plentiful increaſe
'of all good.

The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghaſtly look, he ſaw a knife lying on a table, to which he running haſtily ſnatched hold of it, as intending to miſchief himſelf; but his friends laying hold of him, ſtop'd him in his purpoſe: whereupon with indignation he ſaid, *I would I were above God, for I know he will have no Mercy on me.*

Thus went he homewards, often ſaying, that he envied the condition of *Cain* and *Judas*: He lay about eight weeks in this caſe, in a continual burning, neither deſiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digeſtion, ſo ſpent that he appeared a perfect Anatomie, expreſſing

preſſing to the view nothing but ſinews and bones: vehemently raging for drink, ever pining, yet fearful to live long; dreadfull of Hell, yet coveting death; in a continual torment, yet his own Tormentor, And thus conſuming himſelf with grief and horror, impatience and deſpair, like a living man in Hell, he repreſented an extraordinary example of the juſtice and power of God. And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few days after his arrival at his own home, he departed this preſent life. Yet an occaſion to make us remember, *That ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God,* but charity to men, to teach him to hope all things.

FINIS.

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